

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 18 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, 4 and 5 and claims 2, 4 and 5 together with claim 17 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 6-7, 9-16 and 18 remain in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

The rejection of claim 17 is rendered moot by the cancelation of that claim.

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue USP 7,188,137 in view of Freedman 2004/0249650. In response, independent claims 1 and 18 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2, 4 and 5. In connection with claim 5, the Examiner stated:

As per claim 5, Freedman discloses the one-to-one business support system, wherein the output device of said shop terminal obtains and/or stores customer attribute information of a customer, information indicating a rank when the customer is ranked on a predetermined criterion, information indicating a commodity purchased by the customer in the past and information indicating a history of a relation with the customer, and outputs any one of these information items that confirms to a condition designated by the operator (See Freedman, Page 4, Paragraphs 0038-0040).

This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to claims 1, 3, 6-7, 9-16 and 18, as amended.

Representative claim 1, as amended, is directed to a one-to-one business support system comprising a number of elements in combination. The claimed combination includes a storage device, a client computer and a server. The client computer includes main office and shop terminals, the latter including an output device. The output device of the shop terminal obtains and/or stores attribute information of a customer, information indicating a rank when the customer is ranked on a predetermined criterion, information indicating a commodity purchased by the

customer in the past and information indicating a history of a relation with the customer. The output device outputs any one of these information items that confirms to a condition designated by the operator. As a result, customer requirements together with historical information about past purchases may be analyzed to provide relation tools that are more suitable for the customer. Neither Inoue nor Freedman, singularly or in combination, discloses or suggest such a business support system.

The Examiner asserts that a similar combination, in which a client computer includes a shop terminal that obtains and/or stores attribute, customer ranking, past commodity purchase history and relationship information, and output any one of the aforementioned that confirms to a condition designated by the operator, is disclosed by Freedman. Applicants respectfully disagree. There is no teaching or suggestion in Freedman, alone or in combination with Inoue, of such a combination of elements. For example, while the Examiner cites to paragraphs [0038] – [0040] of Freedman as disclosing the elements recited by claim 5 (now incorporated into claims 1 and 18), there is no mention therein of a client rank or ranking or any other equivalent disclosure that would render obvious the claimed combination. In the absence of such teaching or suggestion in either cited reference of the combinations of claims 1 and 18, the rejection of the amended claims based on Inoue and/or Freedman must be withdrawn.

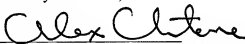
Insofar as neither Inoue nor Freedman discloses or suggests the subject matter of independent claim 1 and insofar as dependent claims 3, 6-7 and 9-16 all depend from claim 1, it follows that those dependent claims are also allowable.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692004500.

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Respectfully submitted,

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